

Joint Chairs' Conclusions of the Conference: Asia 2015: Promoting Growth, Ending Poverty

On 6 – 7 March 2006, at Lancaster House in London, we and our three organisations, the Department for International Development, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, co-hosted a major international conference on the development successes in Asia and challenges to be faced in the coming decade.

Coming together here in London has helped re-focus the attention of the international community on the importance of continued – and increased – assistance to developing Asia. The conference has reaffirmed the importance of Asia for global poverty reduction and development, as well as being a prime driver of global growth.

The conference recognised that Asia has achieved remarkable successes in its development. More people have been lifted out of extreme poverty in Asia in the last twenty years than at any other time in human history. Asia is changing. Yet there remain immense challenges. Some 620 million Asians, two-thirds of the world's poor people, still live on less than \$1 a day.

The conference confirmed our shared belief that with the right policy approaches and with a development partnership that is meaningful, effective and generous, there is a real prospect of ending extreme poverty in Asia within a generation.

The conference felt that development partners must work together to ensure that our shared vision of ending poverty in Asia within a generation becomes a reality. The vision sees Asia as a thriving regional economy that is well integrated internally and with the international economy. And that vision also sees all countries and citizens as having the opportunity to contribute to economic growth and to share the benefits to improve their quality of life. Poor women and men must actively participate in growth today: growing now and reducing poverty later will not work.

Asia's phenomenal economic success may not automatically continue. Growth needs to be unlocked by governments tackling each set of constraints that emerge. We must help improve health and education outcomes and employment opportunities for all. Faster growth must be more effectively spread - between states and regions, between communities, and between households. Infrastructure, led by government and in partnership with the private sector, needs to play its part. And growth must be sustainable - the conference agreed that growing now and cleaning up later will not work.

The conference underlined that continued financial and other support for our development work is essential for reducing poverty, achieving the MDGs, and fuelling broad-based economic and social development in the region. The World Bank remains fully committed to scaling up its knowledge and financial assistance, to achieve the goals of promoting growth and ending poverty. The UK's aid budget is increasing in line with the commitments made in 2005, enabling aid flows to Asia to rise substantially. Aid helps and should be

increased, but that is only part of the story in Asia and other types of partnership are equally important.

The conference reaffirmed our commitment to implementing the Paris declaration on aid effectiveness of 2005, to improving the way development partners align behind countries' priorities and harmonise to be more effective. We've got to be flexible in the way we work with each other. We have to listen to each other. It was recognised that development partners need to respond to the changing demands of our partners and customers. The ADB is addressing this in its new medium-term strategy, seeking to be catalytic in bringing private resources into development, and working with others in expanding joint analytical, technical assistance and advisory work in middle-income countries.

Participants recognised the need to think about more than the aid relationship. Regional cooperation, sharing ideas, trading and investing with one another are important. Participants stressed the value of sharing experiences and south-south cooperation within and beyond the Asian region.

Countries can only deal with our need for energy, with climate change, communicable diseases, pollution and the search for peace and security if we do so collectively. Shared commitments to human rights, fighting corruption, and to good governance must continue to be taken seriously. UN reform should help us to do each of these more effectively and Asian voices need to be clearly heard in discussions on reform over the coming months.

Our organisations will be considering the outcomes of the conference for their future development relations in Asia. A full conference report carrying key messages from the range of discussions and sessions will be available in the coming weeks and will be placed on the conference website www.asia2015conference.org.

Hilary Benn
DFID, UK

Haruhiko Kuroda
ADB

Praful Patel
World Bank

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